

National Predictive Service Group (NPSG) Meeting

Meeting Notes

Location: Video/Teleconference

Meeting Dates: April 29-30, 2008

Members Present:

- Tom Wordell – FS/NICC – Fire Analysts Representative – NPSG Chair
- Rick Ochoa – BLM/NICC – Fire Weather Program Representative – NPSG Vice Chair
- Susie Stingley-Russell – ONCC – GACC Center Managers Representative
- Paul Witsaman – NWS, National Weather Service Representative
- Marva Willey – FS/ONCC, Intelligence Coordinators Representative
- Daniel Chan – Georgia Forestry Commission, NASF Representative
- Tom Rolinski – BLM/OSCC – GACC Meteorologists Representative
- Charlie Leonard – FS/NICC – Intelligence Program Representative
- John Barborinas – BIA – Field Level Fire Managers Representative

Members Absent:

- Kim Christensen – FS/NICC Manager – NICC Representative
- Neal Hitchcock – FS/NIFC – NMAC Representative
- Dan Smith – NASF, NWCG Liaison
- Rex McKnight – BLM/NV State Office, Geographic Operations Group Liaison

Guests:

- Robyn Heffernan – Meteorologist - NICC
- Herb Arnold – Remote Sensing/Fire Weather Support, NIFC
- Steve Marion – Meteorologist – EACC
- Paul Schlobohm – FENWT Chair
- Pete Lahm – Fire Air Coordination Team

Notetaker: Lani Williams – Boise Dispatch Center

Meeting Agenda Topics:

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Update/Info Sharing from Met and Intel Working Groups
3. Update on 7-Day Issues (Current Status, Future Enhancements, Verifications, etc.)
4. Proposal for NPSG from Fire Behavior Committee
5. Update on NWCG Restructuring and Budget Development
6. Predictive Services Staffing Issues
7. Predictive Services Slogan Update and Decision

8. Predictive Services Communications Plan – Status, Slogan, Brochures, etc.
9. CWCG Predictive Services Study
10. Seasonal Assessment Workshop Updates
11. Fire Weather Committee Report
12. Fire Weather National Agreement and Annual Operating Plan
13. Discussion about conversion to CMMS and how RAWs station data needs to be edited in ASCADS. Need for FAQ sheet?
14. FAMWEB Fire Occurrence/Weather Data and CD Production. Update on who should coordinate and provide oversight.
15. SIT and 209 Program updates including user guides and ownership reporting issues.
16. Update on Fire Season Smoke Forecasting Proposal
17. Bin items and future meeting logistics

Exhibits:

- A. Action Items, Decisions and Meeting Topics
- B. Proposal to NPSG from the Fire Behavior Committee
- C. WIP Substructure Overview/NWCG Restructuring
- D. Combined Organization Structure
- E. RAWs Workshop Brief – ASCADS and CMMS

Tuesday – April 29**Agenda Item: Welcome and Introductions and Meeting Logistics – Tom Wordell**

Tom welcomed everyone and covered the agenda.

Agenda Item: Update/Info Sharing from Met and Intel Working Groups

- Intelligence Working Group – Marva Willey
 - Intelligence Specialist Training:
 - The Rocky Mountain Geographic Area will be hosting the Intelligence Specialist Training December 2008
 - Personnel Changes:
 - Gina Dingman is the new Intelligence Coordinator at Eastern Great Basin
 - Kathy Weigardt, Intelligence Coordinator at the Southern Geographic Area has accepted a new position with the ROSS Project.
 - Sit/209 Program:
 - The new Users Guide has been posted to the web
 - Department of Homeland Security (DHS) ICS 209:
 - DHS has adopted the ICS 209 for all risk incidents. New fields have been added and new selections have been added to accommodate “All Risk” Incidents.
 - The issue remains is that this is a paper form without a repository or protocol for submission.

- There is agreement that we may continue to use the current form which currently meets our needs.
 - There is the possibility that when our Incident Management Teams are deployed to FEMA incidents they may be required to complete duplicate forms.
 - The Geospatial Task Force should be interfacing with DHS. Susan Goodman is the Lead.
- Web Task Group:
 - The Group is currently reviewing the Geographic Area Websites for compliance. They expect to be completed by June 2008.
- Cheetah – Tom Wordell

Additional funding has been received from Marc Rounsaville to develop an Access database with historic 209 data and query routine to analyze resource usage over a given date range by GACC and timber vs brush/grass fuel model. This data can then be used to revise the resource side of Cheetah. Brian Booher is working on the user interface for the program. There is also potential to correlate this data for use with the resource side of the 7-Day Product.
- Meteorologist Working Group – Tom Rolinski
 - Logo
 - The Mets have reached agreement on the Predictive Services Logo.
 - Projects
 - The specifications are currently being developed for the online 7-Day Product.
 - Specifications are also being developed for the GIS Toolbar.
 - Personnel
 - Heidi Strater will be job sharing the Alaska Meteorologist position with Sharon Alden.
 - The Northern Rockies vacancy announcement closes in two weeks.
- Dispatch Efficiency Study – Susie Stinlgey-Russell

The Study was presented to the Chief of the Forest Service on Friday and will be presented to the Department of Interior on Monday, along with briefings on Training and Aviation. The Forest Service and the DOI will be coordinating release of the three studies.

Agenda Item: Proposal for NPSG from the Fire Behavior Committee – Tom Wordell (Exhibit B)

The Fire Behavior Committee is attempting to promote new ways to provide continuing education opportunities for Fire Behavior Analysts (FBANs) and Long Term Fire Analysts (LTANs). They have budgeted \$5000 to sponsor up to five annual Fire Behavior Workshops. They are requesting that NPSG provide an additional \$5000 in funding as well as to provide coordination at the Geographic Area with the specific intent of providing

remote access to participants nationwide. To date, only one annual workshop has been held; that was in Missoula, Montana.

Discussion:

NPSG currently sponsors two annual workshops. There might be an opportunity to expand the format to include FBANs and LTANs at the Seasonal Assessment Workshops and their input could be beneficial to the process. Early coordination would be required.

Update on 7-Day Issues – Tom Rolinski

- Alaska is close to being online. The Home Page has been developed and is waiting on data output issues to be remedied.
- The Eastern Area has begun production and is the first Geographic Area to do so.
- The National map will become visible when all Geographic Areas are online.

PS Slogan

Decision: *NPSG has adopted the slogan – “Leadership in Decision Support Services”*

Agenda Item: Update on Fire Season Smoke Forecasting Proposal – Tom Rolinski and Pete Lahm

There are opportunities for Predictive Services to become involved Smoke Forecasting. The need for this information may become more critical in with the shift in implementation of Appropriate Management Response (AMR). There are however obstacles to overcome; including: data accuracy and reliability and Geographic Area participation.

- ➔ **Action Item:** Develop a proposal to demo a product this summer; define product needs and requirements.
Responsible: Tom Rolinski, Chuck Maxwell, John Snook and Pete Lahm
Due Date: June 31, 2008

Agenda Item: Update on NWCG Restructuring and Budget Development – Paul Schlobohm (Exhibits C and D)

Paul is acting as the NPSG Liaison for the budget process.

The new Governance Structure:

- Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) – Provides strategic leadership and oversight
- Fire Executive Council (FEC) – Coordinated Policy and Direction (Fire/Fuels/Aviation)
- National Wildfire Coordinating Group – Coordinated Policy and Program Implementation

Why did NWCG and NFAEB combine?

- To provide improved coordination for:

- Policy
- Standards
- Operations
- To decrease role confusion
- To reduce overlap and duplication
- To simplify governance

The NWCG’s Vision for the future is: The Nation’s resources and communities are protected and enhanced through safe, comprehensive and cohesive interagency wildland fire management.

- Goals:
 - Standards and Guidelines
 - Qualifications
 - Communications
 - Fire Policy
 - Program Implementation
 - Incident Operations
- Funding will tier off these goals

NWCG Substructure:

Working Teams are now Committees and the number has been reduced from over 50 to 14. The Committees are organized into Branches and each Branch has a Coordinator. NPSG is under NMAC, and is not assigned to a Branch. There are three Branches:

- Preparedness Branch
- Policy, Planning and Management Branch
- Equipment and Technology Branch

Restructuring Timeline:

March 2008	Designate Interim Branch Coordinators and Committee Chairs
Spring 2008	Define Committee Scope
Summer 2008	Develop Committee Charters
Summer 2008- Summer-2009	Define and Develop Organizational Support
Summer 2008	Develop New Position PDs
Fall 2008	Recruit and Fill New Positions
Summer 2008-Fall2009	Define and Charter Subcommittees and Task Teams
Summer 2008-Summer 2009	Develop and Implement Transition Plans
Fall 2009	Transition Completed

Discussion:

- The biggest priority at this time is budget requests; Paul will be working with Tom Wordell on the process for NPSG.
- Development of the position descriptions for the Branch Coordinator positions is also a priority.
- Need for continuing educations is one issue that has been identified and needs to be addressed.
- Under the new structure opportunities to provide support to the committees is being addressed.
- Contact Paul if you have any questions.

Agenda Item: Predictive Services Staffing Issues – Tom Wordell

Discussion:

- Geographic Areas are experiencing shortages of meteorologists and a large turnover on Intelligence Coordinators.
- There is a shallow pool of individuals with the skills required for an Intelligence Coordinator; and rather than developing new individuals – Geographic Areas continue to utilize retirees.
- Western Great Basin will be recruiting for a Fire Analyst to fill their vacant Intelligence Coordinator position. The announcement should be released soon.
- The National Weather Service will be augmenting their capability through the use of Australian Meteorologists. These individuals will be made available to Geographic Areas experiencing staffing shortages.

Predictive Services Communications Plan – Status, Predictive Services Slogan, Brochures – Steve Marion

The Meteorologist Working Team has been working on developing a marketing plan. They would like to develop a short video clip that would be able to be presented at meetings and NWCG courses. They would like to have the video available in the fall and will be asking for video clips to be included. They are also finalizing the brochure and hope to have it available by June.

Discussion:

- The brochure should be near final as it has already been through several review processes. They may be printed through NIFC.
- NPSG will be sending out shirts, displaying the new logo. Robyn will be sending out an email and collecting sizes. Patches may be available as well.

➔ **Action Item:** Explore the possibility of purchasing pins or pens for marketing.
Responsible: Tom Rolinski
Due Date: June 31, 2008

Wednesday – April 30**Agenda Item: CWCG Predictive Services Study – Rick Ochoa**

- The Forest Service will hire two positions (GS-12 and GS-13)
- The GS-12 position will be recruited as an upward mobility position; either a 7/9/11/12 or a 9/11/12.
- The Outreaches should be out shortly.

Agenda Item: Seasonal Assessment Workshop Updates – Rick Ochoa and Robyn Heffernan

The Western Seasonal Assessment Workshop was held last week in Boulder, Colorado. There were a total of 49 participants, including Mexico and Canada. The Outlook developed at the workshop will be posted the first of May.

There is an attempt to develop a North American Outlook developed jointly with Mexico and Canada. This still needs provincial consensus within Canada.

There is a new tool for forecasting the Alaska Fire Season; Robyn will disseminate the links.

Next year's workshops have been scheduled:

- Eastern Seasonal Assessment – January 17-29, 2009
- Western Seasonal Assessment – April 21-23, 2009

Agenda Item: Fire Weather Committee Report – Robyn Heffernan

The Committee held their third meeting the last week of February at the Desert Research Institute. Their primary project has been updating the Remote Automated Weather Station (RAWS) standards. They have also reviewed training which includes fire weather curriculum. Other projects include: work with the Western Region Climate Center on RAWS Archive and standards for Belt Weather Kits.

Agenda item: Discussion about conversion to Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) and how RAWS station data needs to be edited in Automatic Sorting, Conversion and Distribution System (ASCADS). Need for FAQ sheet. – Herb Arnold (Exhibit E)

- Automatic Sorting, Conversion and Distribution System (ASCADS)
 - Its primary function:
 1. Accept data from all GOES supported RAWS
 2. Sort and convert RAWS sensor data
 3. Distribute data to:
 - WFMI
 - AKAFS
 - WRCC
 - NWS
 - WIMS
 - Other functions of ASCADS:
 1. Station information (includes metadata)
 2. Reports (includes Rehab report, Station Inventory)
 3. Utilities (includes Watchdog)
 4. RAWS TripLog
 5. Users
 6. ASCADS Mail System
 7. PDT Contacts for DAPS

- 8. ASCADS System Parameters
 - Drawbacks of ASCADS:
 1. Access (Secure NetTerm, Putty)
 2. Ease of use
 3. Age/supportability
 - Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS)
 - Designed to:
 1. Track maintenance performed by the RSFWSU
 2. Provide a general tool for Depot service customers
 - a. Web accessible
 - b. Online sensor and component ordering
 3. Provide certain administrative functions for all RAWs users
 - ASCADS and CMMS – What is the connection?
 - CMMS picked up many “administrative” functions of ASCADS
 - Rehab date
 - Station narrative
 - Station information
 - Station component inventory
 - ASCADS now looks slightly different, fewer options
 - ASCADS and CMMS share data every 24 hours
 - ASCADS and CMMS – Why the changes?
 1. RSFWSU needed a maintenance tracking system
 2. Depot customers disliked ASCADS
 - CMMS will solve both issues (when fully operational)
 - Short and Long term outlook?
 1. CMMS is currently undergoing an in-house test period
 - a. Depot customers should use established (fax) methods to order sensors and components.
 - b. Depot customers should email their maintenance information (Rehab dates, narrative comments) to the RAWs Help Desk.
 2. CMMS will soon be offered to Depot customers for routine use.
 3. ASCADS must eventually be replaced
 - a. Business case study initiated
 - b. Downstream applications also under consideration
 - c. ASCADS remains essential for the RAWs network
 4. Implementation of CMMS and eventual replacement of ASCADS should be transparent to Fire Weather users.

Discussion:

- CMMS should be available in about two months.
- A “Frequently Asked Questions” sheet to cover the basics of CMMS would be beneficial.

Agenda Item: Fire Weather National Agreement and Annual Operating Plan – Rick Ochoa

The National Agreement expired last year. The final draft is being reviewed by NOAA attorneys and the latest issue appears to be resolved. Once signed, it will be posted. The new agreement will provide more flexibility to the Incident Meteorologist (IMET) Program. The Agreement has a term of four years and is accompanied by an Annual Operating Plan.

Agenda Item: FAMWEB Fire Occurrence/Weather Data and CD Production, update on who should coordinate and provide oversight. – Tom Wordell

There have been issues in the data which has prevented its distribution. Under the future NWCG organization, the Fire Occurrence Subcommittee should be responsible for the coordination and distribution of the fire occurrence data.

- ➔ **Action Item:** Coordinate who will be responsible for data collection and distribution of the annual fire occurrence and weather CD in the future.
Responsible: Tom Wordell
Date: Fall, 2008

Agenda Item: SIT and 209 Program updates including user guides and ownership reporting issues. – Charlie Leonard

The 209 program underwent several revisions over the winter and should be static for a while. Current fire weather, including wind speed and gusts has been added back in. Additional security measures will be implemented; each user should have their own account. The User's Guide has been updated with all the latest changes and posted to the web.

There are still challenges with providing NMAC with accurate resource availability. The proposed Tactical Resources Website has been placed on hold.

Agenda Item: Bin Items and Future Meeting Logistics

- Future Meeting Logistics
 - Propose replace one meeting a year with a virtual meeting, with the addition of monthly conference calls if needed.
 - Next Meeting: October 14-16; in Sacramento or Redding
Meeting would begin at 1300 on Tuesday through the end of the day Thursday, to accommodate the holiday.
 - February Meeting: Tentatively – February 10-12, 2009; in Boise
- ➔ **Action Item:** Finalize meeting location and logistics for next NPSG meeting
Responsible: Susie Stingley-Russell
Due Date: July 15, 2008

- Budget

- Live Fuel Moisture Standards – Ed Delgado is working with San Dimas
 - There is savings from the Seasonal Assessment Workshops, due to additional funding from NOAA.
 - The Annual Fall Predictive Services Meeting is being planned. It will be in Estes Park.
 - Value of Predictive Services – a joint project with the University of Nevada
 - GIS Tool Bar – a toolbar and tool to verify the Monthly and Seasonal Assessment should be out for bid at the end of the week.
 - Online 7-Day Product Proposal – costs may be higher than the proposal
 - There is still \$40,000 uncommitted; this includes funding for the GIS Tool Bar(s) and the 7-Day Product Proposal.
- Future Vision of Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS)
 - Discussion:
 - The Dispatch/Coordination System needs to be involved in the future process.
 - Proposals are being made that would impact dispatch centers, including requesting that they would be responsible for entering fire information into WFDSS.
 - There is an additional proposal involving an end to end reporting system.
 - It is unknown if any of these programs would interface with each other, or with a current CAD program.
- ➔ **Action Item:** Contact Kim Christensen and have the Center Managers involved in investigating the impact to the Dispatch/Coordination System.
- Responsible:** Susie Stingley-Russell
- Due Date:** June 31, 2008

End Meeting